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CHANTILLY AND ITS COLLECTIONS.

BY EUGEN VON JAGOW.

ON the twenty-fifth of October, 1886, the Duc d'Aumale, uncle of the Comte de Paris, presented to the Academy, of which he is a member, his domain of Chantilly, with its castle, its costly collections, extensive forest, and celebrated race-course, reserving for himself only the income. The value of the real estate alone is over thirty-one million francs. This sum is really too low an estimate, as the building alone cost the celebrated Marshal, the great Condé, over forty millions, and the Duc d'Aumale has spent over six millions in restoring the castle, part of which he has borrowed. This is to be paid in 1934 by yearly payments, so that from that time the Academy will have all the revenues to use for increasing the art treasures, for granting pensions and prizes, and for furthering philanthropic aims of all kinds.

It will be easily understood that there has been much speculation as to the motives which have induced the Duke,

well known as a soldier and writer, the victor of Abd-el-Kader, and president of the court which condemned Bazaine, to make such a generous present. Of course the banishment of the pretenders to the crown decreed a few months since, and somewhat later that of the Duke himself, furnished a strong motive. The press of the radical party has repeatedly talked of confiscating the property of the Orleans family. It was an act of political foresight to evade such an accident by a gift to the Academy, which had existed for centuries, which was conservative from its very nature, but still powerful, just as in 1852 the Duke transferred his property by a false sale to an English banker, in consequence of the decree of confiscation.

Evil tongues contend that he only wished to punish his ambitious nephew for not sharing his political views. However that may be, the gift is a fact, and we will now bestow a few glances

upon the history of Chantilly, once celebrated for its towers, and upon the modern castle, with its pictures and other treasures.

In 1422 the castle passed into the possession of the celebrated Montmorencys. The great Constable Anne de Montmorency, one of the most adventurous and patriotic figures of the France of the Middle Ages, transformed the castle into the most beautiful one in the country. The celebrated architect

In 1632 the inheritance descended through Charlotte de Montmorency, who married Henri de Bourbon, to the not less celebrated family of Condé, whose last member committed suicide in 1830. His nephew, the Duc d'Aumale, who had been for a long time a widower, was his heir. His sons, the Duc de Guise and the Prince of Condé, died before him. This short sketch shows that Chantilly belonged for two centuries to the Montmorencys, then for two centuries to the Condés, a half-century to the Duc d'Aumale, at last to pass into the hands of the immortal Institute.

The greatest glory of Chantilly was under the son of the king whose fêtes are so graphically described by Madame de Sévigné in the letters to her daughter, Madame de Grignan. Louis XIV., who with his court hunted there and spent sixteen thousand francs for a single exhibition of fireworks, was so charmed by the castle and wood, as well as the artistic gardening of Le Nôtre, that he wished to purchase Chantilly at any price. "It belongs to your Majesty," replied Condé, "at whatever price your Majesty sees fit to set upon it. I ask only one favor,—to remain the door-keeper." Louis XIV. understood: "I comprehend, cousin: Chantilly will never belong to me." At one of the festivals the celebrated cook Vatel killed himself because the fish which he had expected did not come. Condé entertained almost all the celebrities of literature and art,—the poets of the Hôtel Rambouillet, Racine, Boileau, and the celebrated Bossuet, who later delivered his funeral oration. Condé's grandson, Henri, a sportsman such as we seldom see, as well as minister to



HENRI-EUGÈNE-PHILIPPE-LOUIS D'ORLÉANS,
DUC D'AUMALE.

Donor of the Chantilly Collections. Drawn by Maurice Deville.

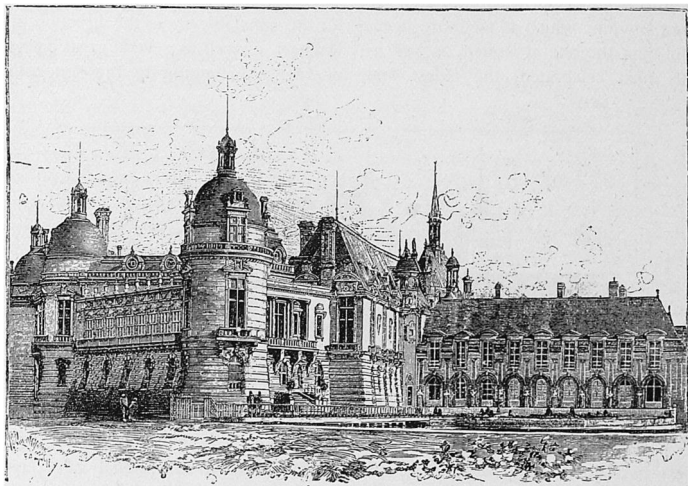
Bullant built the châtelet, the so-called little castle, which is still preserved, with its pillars extending two stories, its large windows reaching to the roof, and many other details which would not disgrace the style of the great Italian Palladio, and which were as elegant and full of life. He also built Écouen, then belonging to Chantilly. By a strange dispensation Écouen also is now used for a philanthropic purpose, for the Knights of the Legion of Honor and their orphans.

Louis XV., built the stables, which could accommodate two hundred horses, and which were remarkable for their huge size. He also deserved well of art, for he had the celebrated genre painter Watteau decorate his boudoir.

The Revolution brought disaster to Chantilly. The old castle was demolished, its treasures of art destroyed or

scope for his powers. He was directed to reproduce as far as possible the castle of the Montmorencys and the Condés which had gone down in the Revolution, and to add large rooms,—a sort of museum,—a task which he accomplished with taste and skill.

The new castle, like the old one, is built upon the rocky plateau of Boutil-



CHANTILLY.—THE NEW CHÂTEAU AND CASTLE.

scattered to the four winds of heaven. Only the châtelet, the pavilion of Enguien, and the stable escaped destruction.

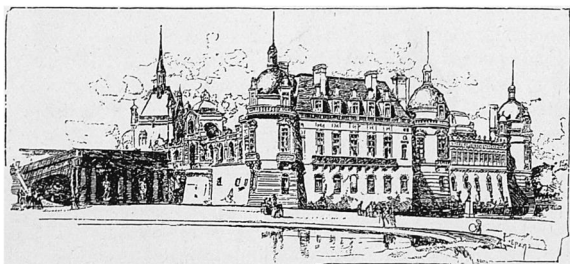
It remained for the Duc d'Aumale to give back to Chantilly at least a part of the old glory, to add new art treasures to the few that were saved, and to erect a new castle, which our picture shows. It is the work of the architect Daumet, who in consequence of the directions of the Duke had not free

liar, and its heavy walls and antique towers follow irregular lines. The galleries, cabinets of curiosities, and rooms containing arms present a varied appearance, and do not in the least resemble the galleries of the Louvre, which follow one another in tiresome regularity. For this reason, the castle, which is built in the French Renaissance style and joined to the châtelet in the most skillful manner, makes a most harmonious impression, which is

heightened by the rich green of the park and the crystal clearness of the water. Only the strictest critics find the contradiction between the irregular ground-plan of the Middle Ages and the modern manner of the building objectionable.

What can we say of the value of its art treasures? There are "The Three Graces" of Raphael, the picture of the Maid of Orleans, the altar of Jean Goujon, which is far more beautiful than the one at Rouen, as well as the most celebrated, the oldest and

lery, frescos by Baudry, and the beautiful "Singeries" by Watteau, on the ground-floor, which represents apes in feminine costume. One is chained and picks red cherries, the other sits at the foot of the tree with the fruit in her lap. The majestically funny expression of these daughters of Eve of the ape family is inimitable. Also the paintings upon glass which represent the "History of Psyche," and were painted for the Constable under the direction of Raphael, as well as several great pieces of faience belonging to the sixteenth



CHANTILLY.—FACADE OF THE CHÂTEAU ERECTED BY M. DAUMET.
(From the Gardens.)

best portrait of Molière, and the so-called "Grandes Heures" of the Duc de Berri, which dates from the fourteenth century, and which shows in very small pictures the historical monuments of the Middle Ages, and is preserved by the Duc d'Aumale in a costly silver chest.

The Duke took many of these treasures with him in his banishment: the drawings and engravings went to Brussels, the books and pictures to London. But many valuables remain in Chantilly,—the exquisite Gobelin tapestries of the great Condé in the stag-horn gal-

lery, frescos by Baudry, and the beautiful "Singeries" by Watteau, on the ground-floor, which represents apes in feminine costume. One is chained and picks red cherries, the other sits at the foot of the tree with the fruit in her lap. The majestically funny expression of these daughters of Eve of the ape family is inimitable. Also the paintings upon glass which represent the "History of Psyche," and were painted for the Constable under the direction of Raphael, as well as several great pieces of faience belonging to the sixteenth

century and of exceptional value, remain for the Academy, which can increase its revenues by asking a price of admission, a course impossible for the Prince.

The altar already mentioned, designed by Bullant, completed by Jean Goujon, and rich with bas-reliefs in the French Renaissance style, can no more be removed from Chantilly than can the mausoleum of Henri de Bourbon Condé. The chapel, where the hearts of the Condés are preserved, with its statuary, is recommended by the Prince to the especial care of the Academy,

which, as is well known, tried to prevent his banishment.

The library, perhaps the most valuable in France, since the Prince spared no cost in collecting the books which had once belonged to Henri de Bourbon, follows its possessor, as we have already said, abroad; but we hope that after his death it may again return to France. The same may be said of the pictures, among which Raphael's "Maid of Orleans" and "Three Graces," the portrait of Molière by Mignard, Gerard's "Bonaparte," two masterpieces by Delaroche, and a portrait of himself, are the most important. For the miniature picture by Raphael which we have already mentioned the Duke paid six hundred thousand francs, so that it might not fall into the possession of an Englishman.

During the siege of Paris and after the end of the armistice, the staff of the Prussian cavalry division was quartered at Chantilly. I still have a lively remembrance of the place. I had to introduce myself to Count Goltz, after-

wards aide to Emperor William, and then in command of the cavalry division. He was always very pleasant, and certainly more unassuming in his manner than the imperious Duke. Everywhere there were the gay uniforms, especially those of the cavalry, and from far and wide troops came to forage about Chantilly. They had ample opportunity—especially when their visits were often repeated—to become familiar with all the beautiful surroundings of the castle, the splendid park with its fountains which served as a model for Versailles, the park of Sylvia and Mortefontaine, the race-course, one of the best in France, and the celebrated lake, with its glittering "Château de la Dame Blanche." What splendid rides we had in this forest, which does not lose in comparison with Compiègne or Fontainebleau!

Finally, to those who are interested in the history of Chantilly and its period of glory in the reign of Louis XIV., I recommend Victor Cousin's "Youth of Madame de Longueville."

